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UNCLAS DHAKA 003414

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: AHMADIYAS HAIL IMPROVED POLICE RESPONSIVENESS  
AFTER MOST RECENT ATTACK

1. (SBU) Following several attempts to prevent the construction of an Ahmadiya mosque in the Uttara section of Dhaka since February, a group of alleged extremists vandalized the construction site on July 18. According to local press reports the vandalism occurred as police stood by idly.

2. (SBU) The vandals reportedly pilfered tin sheets at the same time as Ahmadiya Amir (Chief) Mobashsherur Rahman met with State Minister of Home Affairs Babar and top law enforcement officers several miles away. Rahman's private secretary told us that Rahman considered the meeting with

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Babar productive and cordial. Babar, he said, assured the Ahmadiyas the highest levels of protection for their freedom of religion rights and that "no one would be allowed to disturb Ahmadiyas".

3. (SBU) Ahmadiya leaders after the meeting described police protection as more serious and proactive than before. The Officer in Charge at the Uttara Police Office was highly attentive to their needs following the attack on July 18, they said, and has already scheduled a reconciliation meeting between the parties for immediate dispute resolution.

4. (SBU) Comment: Press reports of police indifference during the July 18 incident may, in this case, be over-blown.

CHAMMAS